Alleged corruption in DRDO

†5117. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Rashtriya Sahara', New Delhi on 16th April, 2002 under the caption, 'Na Sena Ki Madad, Na Desh Ko Fayada, Bhrashtachar Mein Dooba Raksha Anusandhan Vikas Sangathan';

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to hold an inquiry into the case?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is no truth in the news report of 'Rashtriya Sahara' dated 16th April, 2002 under the title 'Neither help to Army, nor beneficial to nation, corruption in Defence Research and Development Organisation'.

(c) Points raised in the news-item have been enquired into by HQrs Fact Finding Committee. Nothing adverse has been noticed by the Committee. However, the matter is also being investigated further by CBI, Dehradun branch.

Development to ammunition for 155mm Howitzers

5118. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Ordnance Factory Organisation failed to develop three out of seven types of ammunition of 155 mm Howitzers, which were supplied to them as far back as 1991—93;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to develop all types of ammunition of 155 mm Howitzers?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Ordnance Factories developed five types out of the seven types of ammunition to be developed for 155mm gun system. Two types of ammunition *i.e.* 155mm smoke Infra Red and 155mm Cargo could not be developed as related technology documents were not received from Bofors due to imposition of ban.

Out of these, one, namely, Infra Red shell is now not required by Army. DRDO is executing a project to develop the other item, *viz.* cargo shell.

Delay in LCA and Missile Programme

5119. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence Research and Development Organisation have come into question with a Parliamentary Committee report indicating that the Light Combat Aircraft programme as well as the induction of surface to air missile Akash and Trishul have been delayed;

(b) if so, what are the main reasons for delay in LCA and Missile programme;

(c) whether Government has seriously taken up this issue;

(d) if so, what is the progress being made; and

(e) by what time both LCA and Akash and Trishul will be made available soon to the defence forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Main reasons for delay in LCA project are attributed to lack of development experience, non-availability of ready infrastructure, Foreign Exchange (FE) crunch of 1992, sanctions imposed by USA in 1998 and technological complexities. The delay in missile development programme is attributed to enhancement in scope of work and technology denials such as Missile Technology Control Regimes (MTCR).

(c) Yes, Sir.